



## Hexenhaus: Modern Music for Modern Vampires

Gothic Music Interview, October 1999

by Jett Black



Shrouded in literary and real-life mysteries, thick smoke and a penchant for theatrical decadence, Hexenhaus joins Seraphim Shock, another dramatic gothic shock-rock band, for three shows in Texas on the first of two Seraphim Shock tours planned for this year. Hexenhaus will perform live at Wacky's, San Antonio, TX, May 17; at Atomic Cafe, Austin, TX, May 18; and at Trees, Deep Ellum, Dallas, TX, May 19, 1999. Please check for website info at the close of this interview. Robert Whitus of Hexenhaus takes a break from last-minute preparations for the tour to respond to a few questions.

**Tell us about Lady Bathory. Who was she? And why have you chosen to honor her through Hexenhaus?**

She was the "bather in blood" - it's a definite vampiric image that sticks in the mind - we're even more influenced by the writings of HP Lovecraft.

**Describe and please explain concepts with Assemblage of the Desolate. How did this song evolve?**

This idea came to me while reading Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus - the Thoughts of Anne Rice's vampire theatre performing the play.

**How much of Hexenhaus has been influenced by Rozz Williams/Christian Death?**

I'd say we were greatly influenced by Christian death - poetically, physically and spiritually. I've always admired Rozz for his surreal verbalization and for his ability to capture an audience. I recall the first time I saw them perform in the late 80's in a venue with a crowd of maybe 50 - the audience was so captivated and so respectful.

**Who are current members in Hexenhaus?**

Hexenhaus is comprised of Inanna (Brian Artwick) and Alyda (Robert Whitus). Inanna is responsible for the keyboards and orchestral score and Alyda does the lyrics, vocalizations and theatrical presentations. For this tour we're focusing on more of a performance art theme - isolation and loneliness - hence only a single presence on stage.

**How has membership in Hexenhaus evolved and shifted during the past 8 years?**

Since '91 Hexenhaus has benefited from the contribution of several female vocalists. Our latest being Jessicka who we used for the "Unveiled" EP as well as live backing vocals. Currently, Inanna is on sabbatical only concentrating on new material.



**What was the initial purpose behind forming Hexenhaus?**

Every time we went to a "goth" show it seemed like any other typical rock band - lacking atmosphere. We wanted to create what we felt was more along the lines of an old hammer film. Lots of smoke, candles and dreamlike - "music for the modern vampire."

**How did styles found in Hexenhaus today evolve from those early beginnings?**

The concept has pretty much stayed the same throughout the years. The only real change was during our month-long tour of Mexico in 1995. Two additional performers were brought in for ritualistic purposes, slightly heavier mixes were used as well as we were touring with four death-metal bands.

**What instrumentation and gear do you employ to create the music of Hexenhaus?**

Smoke and mirrors.

**How would you say that you relate to Hexenhaus overall after eight years of membership?**

Hexenhaus has always been for ourselves and our need to create more of a personal outlet than for the public.

**What new opportunities now wait to unfold for Hexenhaus?**

Currently we're working on expanding our European audience and contacts there; particularly in France, Belgium and Germany.

**Tell us about the Discovery Channel documentary, Children of Dracula, and how Hexenhaus became a part of that special.**

One of the producers contacted us and let us know he was working on this documentary on "real life vampires." He asked permission to come and film a performance. We thought it was a great idea and later we went in for a short interview detailing the scene and our band.

**What and who is Coolridge about? It's actually spelled Coolridge on the compilation. Was that intentional?**

Yes, intentional, indeed. The song "Coolridge" is based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge among other authors; a writer with great epiphany who struggled with putting to paper what was in the mind. The song also specifically reflects many of the torments that faced Edgar Allen Poe and writers of that ilk. Writers that don't see success until after their deaths now congregate on a cool ridge and drink the milk of paradise.

**How does Coolridge differ from other Hexenhaus tracks?**

It doesn't really differ. Most of our work deals with struggling with an inner torment and dreams. This one is perhaps more specific to literature than personal life.



**What will you seek to accomplish through Hexenhaus before the millennium expires?**

A new album is in the works and as always we're constantly looking for touring possibilities. The current album, "Dreamlands," will be available on this tour and at shows in the Dallas area or by contacting us via email or through our PW box (listed at the end of this interview).

**How did you come to be contacted by Hollows Hill for inclusion upon the Dim View of the Future compilation?**

We heard they were making a compilation of American goth bands and submitted our material. It was a great privilege to be included with bands like shadow project and Gitane Demone.

**Have you considered re-releasing any tracks as club re-mixes?**

Yes, we have several re-mixes. We're just not sure what we're going to do with them yet. Possibly they'll be released by the end of the summer on an EP.

**Unveiled - how do you feel about Unveiled? And how has this track been received by radio and club DJs?**

This is a very personal song with ties to the novel the story of O and it seems to be a favorite among our listeners.

**What will you entitle the next Hexenhaus release? And when will it become available for distribution and purchase?**

Right now it's untitled, as with all our work right now. They are created, recorded, mixed, mastered and made at home. They can be purchased at our shows or by emailing [furnace@gte.net](mailto:furnace@gte.net).

**Who will be handling future Hexenhaus distributions?**

Possibilities for our European distribution are being looked at right now.

**What side projects have you worked with outside of Hexenhaus?**

I've also portrayed the synthetic Christ for the industrial project Furnace and done vocals for a darkwave/dance project going under the name of "Push."

**Have you released any recordings other than through Hexenhaus?**

"Push" has an album entitled "love is..." And furnace has several live videos and an EP on vinyl through relapse records and their original demo, "Voice of the Mother."

**At the time this interview initially posts to the web, you are currently touring with Seraphim Shock. Where is your first show set to occur?**

There was supposed to be a show in Houston, but the club night there was shut down so the first night will be in San Antonio followed by a show in Austin and then here in Dallas at Trees.

**You'll be performing may 19th in Dallas at Trees, again opening for Seraphim shock along with Omega Alpha. This is home ground, but how do you plan for this performance to differ from any previous Hexenhaus performances?**

That always depends on my state of mind before I walk out on stage. :-)

**Who is Omega Alpha and how would you describe their musical style?**

I have no idea, but we'll all find that out on Wednesday.

**When and where on this tour will be your last performance opening for Seraphim shock?**

The Dallas date.

**Tell us about your most memorable performance and what makes it significant for you.**

Our entire tour through Mexico playing in front of crowds sometimes as large as 500.

**What experiences and events have been marked as mile-stones for Hexenhaus?**

Finally playing at the Lizard Lounge - it's been the only real "goth" venue we've played at.

**How can our readers best contact Hexenhaus?**

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